



NOAA Teacher at Sea
Mary Ann Penning
Onboard NOAA Ship ALBATROSS IV
July 9 – July 20, 2007

I am Mary Ann Penning, a fifth grade teacher at Randolph Elementary School in Arlington, VA. I am sailing aboard the NOAA (National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration) Fisheries Research Vessel ALBATROSS IV with NOAA's Teacher at Sea program. I will be part of the crew of scientists collecting sea scallop data on the first leg of this three leg expedition. The mission of the entire cruise is to collect information about sea scallops and other species to help manage the sea scallop fishery properly. Our trip spans twelve days from July 9-July 20 and will cover the southern range of the sea scallop habitat on the continental shelf from New Jersey to the tip of North Carolina. I have been excited for several months waiting for this trip to begin.

It's the evening of July 9th, sailing day, and we're still in port in Woods Hole. There have been several unavoidable mechanical issues in today's plans and, hopefully, tomorrow morning at 8:00 we'll be leaving the harbor. It seems that many people have been working hard behind the scenes to make our delayed departure a reality. The volunteers are anxious to put the sea scallop survey into production. Most people on the ship seem to be patient, though, and the unexpected is taken in stride. Those living within a reasonable driving distance have gone home and will return early tomorrow morning.



NOAA Teacher at Sea, Mary Ann Penning, prepares to set sail aboard NOAA Ship ALBATROSS IV out of Woods Hole, MA.

I had stayed on the ship last night, when I first arrived. There were just a few people on board and it was pretty quiet, except for the normal ship noises. But this morning was a different scene. There was crew rushing back and forth through the narrow hallways all morning. College volunteers with an interest in science and other crew members were arriving from various parts of the US. Meetings and orientations were held to acquaint the newcomers with various aspects of the cruise and its sea scallop mission under the guidance of chief scientist Victor Nordahl and Operations Research Analyst Deborah

Hart. Foul weather gear was gathered and rules and regulations were dispensed with a smattering of good humor thrown in. After my first day of meals, I can tell that I am going to have to watch my calorie intake; the brownies will have to suffice for two meals – they're too big for just one! What a whirlwind of activity. Nice people all around.

I'll update my log as soon as I can. I learned today that I'm on the day shift from noon until midnight. It will be interesting to see how all of this plays out, once we're underway.